

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 353.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## ANOTHER HECATOMB TO THE GOD CAPITAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**C**IVILIZED humanity once more stands aghast. Hardly recovered from the shock of the **Iroquois {Theater}** disaster, it is appalled by the news of the awful calamity aboard the **General Slocum**, an excursion boat, which, laden mainly with women and children, was burned on the Sound, amid heartrending scenes and a loss of life footing well up into the thousand mark. Where yesterday all was joy and gladness over the prospect of a day of pleasure, to-day, with whole families wiped out, all is mourning and sorrow, while a shocked community asks "who is responsible?" and sets about to bring the responsible parties to book, fully confident that such a course will prove a deterrent to the carelessness that is alleged to be the cause of this and similar disasters. Already has the captain of the ill-fated craft has been signaled out as the scape-goat, just as in the Iroquois, the Park avenue tunnel, and other disasters of a like kind, blameless wage workers have been compelled to bear the brunt. But is he really to blame? And will his conviction bring the desired result? No; decidedly, No! The blame and the remedy are to be sought elsewhere and differently applied!

Modern industrial and commercial activities are so grouped that they compel the herding of large masses of human beings in large cities. The capitalists may declare that Socialism will crush individuality; but the fact it that it is the big cities of capitalism that do that. Nay, they crush life as well. The masses of human beings thus herded are compelled to seek pleasure and recreation en masse. Devoid of the means to retire at leisure to the country with a chosen few, there to enjoy the beauties of woodland and field which are denied to them and for which they yearn, without the wealth to build palatial yachts on which they may take some "choice" companions on cruises in waters of whose charms they have read and dreamed, the

herded masses of the cities are compelled to gratify their desires by embarking on cheap excursions in which the craft is not of the best, the risks of danger great, and the loss of life, in case of accident, like that on the *General Slocum*, terrible! On top of this, and hovering like a vampire above it all, is an idle capitalist class who exploit the activities of the cities, and the desires of the population of the latter, in a manner conducive only to their profits, and without any regard for the general welfare. Accordingly the cause of the *Slocum* disaster is inherent in our social system and can only be remedied when the system is remedied.

To many this may appear futile, Quixotic! But far more futile and Quixotic is the notion that the present system under which our men, women and children are sacrificed for the benefit of a small capitalist class, can continue! Is it not the height of criminality to crowd 2,000 men, women and children on a flimsy excursion boat, in order that a Morgan and his boon companions, male and female—especially female—can have the most palatial, spacious, swiftest and best manned steel yachts afloat, on which to indulge their animal propensities? And is it not Quixotic to imagine the suffering masses will tolerate such crime, and forever meekly submit?

To prevent further *Slocum* disasters the capitalist class must be replaced by Society, capitalism by Socialism. Under Socialism, with its use of the means of communication and transportation, industries will be spread over larger areas and population scattered. Under Socialism, with its savings of the waste of competition, the employment of useless and idle labor in productive occupations, and the unrestricted development of science and invention the increase in the production of wealth will be so great as to make the present opportunities of the few, the possessions of all!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded June 2007

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)